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RETAIL PRICES AND BASIC WAGE RATES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1961

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The Consumer Price Index measures quarterly for each capital city separately the variations in prices of commodities and services as affecting a high proportion of the expenditure of wage-earner households. Commodities and services included in the index are food, clothing, drapery, home ownership, rent of privately owned and government owned houses, fuel, light, household appliances and supplies, fares, motor-ing, tobacco, cigarettes, beer, cinema, radio and television licenses, newspapers, postal and telephone services, hairdressing, dry cleaning, and various other items. The index has been constructed with the year 1952-53 as base for each capital city individually and does not provide a comparison of the retail price level in any other city.

The various commodities and services have been combined into groups, and group indexes are available for Food, Clothing and Drapery, Housing, Household Supplies and Equipment, and Miscellaneous.

A full description of the Consumer Price Index is contained in a bulletin (S.B.891) issued in January, 1961, by the Commonwealth Statistician.

During September quarter, 1961, the Consumer Price Index for Brisbane rose from 126.1 to 127.0, an increase of 0.7 per cent. compared with a decrease of 0.5 per cent. during the previous quarter. For the year ended September, 1961, the index showed an increase of 2.8 per cent.

The Food Group index rose from 130.5 to 132.5 during the quarter, an increase of 1.5 per cent., this group being principally responsible for the increase in the combined All Groups index. Consistently high prices for potatoes during the quarter, and increases in the price of meat (mainly beef), caused the food index to rise, but these increases were offset to some extent by lower egg prices.

There was an increase of 0.2 per cent. in the Clothing and Drapery Group, with the index rising from 116.1 to 116.3. This small upward movement was caused mainly by variations in the price of some footwear items.

The Housing Group index of 139.7 for September quarter showed an increase of 0.5 per cent. over the figure of 139.0 calculated for the previous quarter.

In the Household Supplies and Equipment Group the index rose by 0.6 per cent. from 112.3 to 113.0. This increase did not result from significant price movements for individual items, but rather from the combination of relatively small increases for a number of items.

There was an increase of 0.3 per cent. in the Miscellaneous Group index resulting principally from higher prices for hairdressing and tobacco. The relevant indexes were 130.3 in June quarter and 130.7 in September quarter.

Apart from Brisbane, the only capital city which showed an increase in the retail price level during the quarter was Hobart, while the most significant decreases were recorded in Adelaide and Perth. Percentage variations from June quarter, 1961, for each capital were:- Brisbane, +0.7; Hobart, +0.2; Sydney and Melbourne, -0.2; and Adelaide and Perth, -0.6. The weighted average decrease for the six capitals was 0.2 per cent.



COMMONWEALTH AND STATE BASIC WAGE RATES

Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are reviewed by the appropriate Industrial Authorities from time to time - in some cases at fairly regular intervals and in others as a result of special applications for variation of the wage rate. The last variation made by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was an addition of 12s. to the male basic wage with corresponding adjustments to the female and juvenile rates and operated from 7th July, 1961.

The Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1961 abolished automatic quarterly reviews of the basic wage, but the Industrial Commission was empowered to vary the wage after a general hearing as a result of applications by interested parties. Following applications received and a general hearing, the Commission delivered judgment on 24th May, 1961, increasing the male rate by 4s. and the female rate by 3s., operative from 29th May, 1961. No application for adjustment to the basic wage was made consequent on the publication of the Consumer Price Index for June or September quarters, 1961, but the Commission has undetermined applications on general grounds both from employers' and employees' organisations.

Current Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are shown in the following table.

Basic Wage Rates - Australian Capital Cities

Capital City	Commonwealth Basic Wage			State Basic Wage		
	Males	Females	Date of Operation ^a	Males	Females	Date of Operation
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Brisbane ..	13 10 0	10 2 6	7.7.61	14 4 0	10 13 0	29. 5.61
Sydney ..	14 15 0	11 1 0	7.7.61	15 1 0	11 6 0	1.11.61a
Melbourne ..	14 7 0	10 15 0	7.7.61	14 7 0	10 15 0	July, 61b
Adelaide ..	14 3 0	10 12 0	7.7.61	14 3 0	10 12 0	10. 7.61a
Perth ...	14 8 0	10 16 0	7.7.61	14 18 9	11 4 1	30.10.61
Hobart ..	14 14 0	11 0 6	7.7.61	14 14 0	11 0 6	July, 61b

a From the first pay period commencing on or after the date shown.

b Most Wages Boards adopted the Commonwealth rate during July, 1961.

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Consumer Price Index - Total and Group Indexes - Brisbane
 (Year 1952-53 = 100)

Period	Food	Clothing and Drapery	Housing	Household Supplies and Equipment	Miscell- aneous	All Groups
Year -						
1952-53 ..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1953-54 ..	103.4	100.9	101.6	101.7	101.7	102.0
1954-55 ..	104.1	101.3	104.7	102.5	102.0	102.9
1955-56 ..	107.7	102.2	110.5	102.6	108.0	106.3
1956-57 ..	111.5	104.7	118.4	106.5	118.9	112.0
1957-58 ..	113.0	107.8	123.9	108.3	120.5	114.4
1958-59 ..	119.8	109.4	128.4	109.0	123.6	118.2
1959-60 ..	124.2	111.9	132.6	110.6	125.6	121.2
1960-61 ..	130.4	115.1	137.6	111.3	129.5	125.4
Quarter -						
1960 - September	126.9	114.1	136.1	110.6	128.3	123.6
December ..	130.0	115.0	137.0	110.7	129.5	125.1
1961 - March ..	134.0	115.3	138.4	111.5	129.7	126.7
June ..	130.5	116.1	139.0	112.3	130.3	126.1
September	132.5	116.3	139.7	113.0	130.7	127.0

Percentage Increase or Decrease (-) on Previous Quarter

Quarter -							
1960 - September	1.3	0.2	1.6	-0.3	1.7	1.1	
December ..	2.4	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.9	1.2	
1961 - March ..	3.1	0.3	1.0	0.7	0.2	1.3	
June ..	-2.6	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.5	-0.5	
September	1.5	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.7	

Consumer Price Index - Capital Cities
 (Year 1952-53 = 100 for Each City and for Six Capitals)

Period	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average, Six Capitals
Year -							
1952-53 ..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1953-54 ..	101.6	102.0	102.0	102.3	103.0	105.0	102.0
1954-55 ..	102.3	102.0	102.9	103.5	105.2	104.9	102.6
1955-56 ..	105.7	108.1	106.3	106.9	107.9	110.2	106.9
1956-57 ..	112.9	114.0	112.0	111.1	112.9	116.9	113.1
1957-58 ..	114.5	114.4	114.4	111.9	113.6	117.0	114.2
1958-59 ..	115.3	116.6	118.2	114.5	114.7	118.7	116.0
1959-60 ..	117.8	120.0	121.2	118.0	116.9	120.8	118.9
1960-61 ..	122.1	125.9	125.4	122.9	121.2	127.5	123.8
Quarter -							
1960 - September	120.8	124.9	123.6	121.5	119.8	125.8	122.5
December ..	121.6	125.5	125.1	122.4	120.8	127.1	123.3
1961 - March ..	122.5	126.1	126.7	123.4	121.9	128.3	124.2
June ..	123.4	127.1	126.1	124.3	122.4	128.9	125.0
September	123.1	126.8	127.0	123.5	121.7	129.1	124.8